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Group and Membership Correspondence

All Group correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary@kentiam.org.uk

For queries regarding membership please contact the group Membership Secretary

Useful Information

Further useful information can be found by visiting the main IAM website at www.iam.org/uk or the Kent Group Website at www.kentiam.org.uk

Registered charity: no.1051416

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From The Chair

Hi Everyone

Well, I'm pleased to say that it looks like we've made it out the other side of the pandemic, sadly though in the process we have lost around 200 members who did not renew their subscriptions. But we are back and at the moment although things are on the slow side we will get there! Social evenings are held again every month and social events and outings are being organised too. So come on Kent let's see you out and about again!

Associate numbers are gradually on the increase but more are needed for our team of fully trained loyal Observers. So, if you know of anyone that would like to do the Advanced Driving Course please put them in touch with our Associate Coordinator Terry Nunn on associates@kentiam.org.uk.



Back last June we held an indoor Street Party at Grove Green to celebrate our late Queen's Jubilee which was a great success! A royal quiz was won by Mike Ingram's team, best outfit prize went to Avice Harms and best hat prize was won by Carole Nunn. Four stories from those who had met the Queen or members of the royal family were told including one from Lester Parsons. My thanks go to Christine who excelled herself on the night with a fabulous buffet, to Andy & Elaine who did an amazing job running the Raffle and to Terry Nunn for organising the whole event. Incidentally Terry was awarded the prestigious Stan Hawkins certificate for his outstanding contribution to the Group at last year's AGM - well done Terry and thank you!

Then how sad the whole nation was on the 8th of September 2022 when our beloved Queen Elizabeth the second passed away at Balmoral Castle. Thousands of her subjects and visitors queued for days to pay their respects as she lay in state firstly in St Giles Cathedral Edinburgh and then in London at The Palace of Westminster before her State funeral on the 19th of September when she was laid to rest in the Royal Vault at Windsor Castle. The BBC estimated 5.1 billion people watched the funeral on TV worldwide, roughly 63.2% of the world's population, only our great country could execute the proceedings with such military precision!

Elizabeth's eldest son, our new Monarch King Charles the third, will have his Coronation on May 6th with a new bank holiday announced and 3 days of national celebrations. Please note our usual Sunday run at Grove Green will now take place on May 14th.

No doubt hundreds of street parties will once again be held across the length and breadth of the United Kingdom and also the Commonwealth too.



Our December Quiz evening was well attended including teams from RoSPA, EKAM and the KAMG. Thanks to Quiz masters Paul & Janet Fletcher for doing a great job, Andy & Elaine for organising the Raffle and convincing people to part with their life savings, and Christine for another excellent Ploughman's supper, mince pies, sausage rolls and Christmas cake. What a fun way to round off 2022 thoroughly enjoyed by all that attended.

On March 26th the Group went to Rochester for a scrumptious Sunday Carvery Lunch. It would have been great to have had some more attendees but the 32 that did come had a good time with excellent food whilst enjoying other members company - Lester Parsons was our guest speaker.

Hot off the Press a date for your diaries our founder member Roger Phillips, who now lives in the USA, will be coming to Kent for a visit later in the year and has kindly agreed to be our speaker on October 19th. So, if you'd like to learn how our Group began and what his life is like now in Oregon, please make a note to come along.

and now for some good news!!



May 16th will be our 45th AGM!!



Celebration plans are already underway for a buffet supper with soft drinks provided! (if you want alcohol then please bring your own). Christine is making a special cake. Visitors are expected from Head Quarters and also a very special speaker has been arranged - can you guess who it is?



Well, it's none other than our dynamic group treasurer Daren Bubb!
The good news is he will not be talking about all things financial but instead has agreed to entertain us with a hilarious talk on: **"The loves and lusts of a Group Treasurer"**

Consider yourself personally invited so please come along and see what fun he has in store!

As Chairman it is my pleasure to notify all members that the KGAM 2023 Annual General Meeting will take place at The Grove Green Community Centre, Penhurst Close, ME14 5BT on Tuesday May 16th at 8pm and I look forward to seeing you all there.

Best wishes

Linda

Linda Davies
chairman@kentiam.org.uk



Test passes – congratulations everyone!

Trudy BERRIDGE
Matthew BEATTIE - F1rst
Stephen LUTZ - F1rst
Russell RYAN - F1rst
Arjuna RUPASINHA
Michael LANGMAN
Roy SMITH - F1rst
Karen WETHERELL
Kevin LEAPHARD - F1rst
Nicke WILLIAMS
Keith KOLSTEREN - F1rst
Connie MOORE - F1rst
Shay GOODWIN - F1rst
Ann MAGENIS - F1rst
Andrew ATKINS - F1rst
Peter COLE
Mark DALEY
Jane PORTER
Matt ATKINSON
Kevin LOADER
Trudy GLENISTER
Amrit MANGA
Ainsley WESTON



Francis MAHON - F1rst
Harley FRENCH - F1rst
Julian ARNOLD
Catal BISHOPP-MARTIN - F1rst
Michele MELIA - F1rst
Ben PAUL - F1rst
Andrew RICKETTS - F1rst
Elliot BRAZIER
Sam PATEMAN
Faye CLIFTONGAY
Dean HYATT
Stephen GLENISTER
Geoff FISHER
Janet PHILLIPS
Stephen ROSE - F1rst

37 Years Observing with the Kent Group of Advanced Motorists

I have been a Group Observer for almost 37 years – half of my life! – and had been considering for some time whether or not I wanted to undergo my National Observer retest to maintain my qualification and allow me to continue Observer duties which has been a very beneficial aid to keeping my own standards up to a sound level.

It was a bit like applying a driving plan – what you can see, what you can't see & what you can reasonably expect to happen.... I've always had a fourth element.... expect the unexpected which has saved me from some potentially horrendous incidents over the years.

In terms of Observing - What I can see - an on-going routine and involvement

What I can't see - for how long this will continue?

What can I reasonably expect to happen - at some point I'll stop observing

Expect the unexpected - the IAM changed the rules about Group Observers. So, without a National Observer qualification I shall no longer be permitted to continue Observer activity after April 2023.

My 'career' in the Mid-Kent Group, more recently KGAM, began in the mid 80's as a result of attending a Kent Police Better Driving Course. I originally did it in the early 80's enticed by the opportunity of going on a traditional skid pan (at Kent Police HQ training centre) in return for giving up four Thursday evenings and on the final Saturday morning getting on the skid pan all for the bargain cost of around £12. Commercial skid pan sessions were way more expensive.

I was invited to join the Group and undertake my Advanced Driving Test on the second occasion. I enrolled for the course which I did again in the mid 80's just to have another go on the skid pan at the then still bargain cost of £15. At that session a committee member from the MKG (cannot remember her name but she hosted a summer garden party for the Group I recall) who said, well you've given up your time and spent some dosh have you considered taking things to the next level and doing your advanced driving test....so I signed up with Mid-Kent Group and did.

The underlying motivation for trying to improve my driving was to make me safer on the highway. At the time I had a young family and doing up to 1000 miles a week as a sales rep which is a significant exposure to danger given about 50% of collisions involve people driving in the course of their employment. Well, it certainly worked for me; our offspring are now in their forties and bring my wife, Linda, and I great pride in what they have become.

However, I'm still not perfectwell the (alleged) glass casket for over 60 years in the IAM HQ lobby bearing the plaque '*here lies the perfect driver*' proves a point as it's still empty. Routinely watching and critiquing other people's driving does focus the mind on the driving task. I still turn off the radio and give myself a (spoken thoughts) commentary drive and will chide myself if the mirror check was not best or correctly timed for that overtake or another manoeuvre. I wrote a regular article for the group magazine 3 times per annum under a pseudonym which sometimes provoked an interesting response from readers much to my amusement. The incumbent editor of the day was sworn to secrecy about my identity (or risk assassination) and I'm grateful to each and every one of them for their discretion and there were quite a few. Over a 12 year period I penned something like 39 or 40 articles

I remember the first venue I operated from as an Observer at Wrens Cross in Maidstone town centre (another memory challenge: fronted by Les who? and was Bob Mitchell the Chief Observer or Chairman when I joined?) and one memorable Sunday, when we operated an open-house, open-ended programme and 80-85 associates turned up and were dealt with by Observers conducting three runs a-piece. That must have been the catalyst for developing a structured course which I believe came into being under John Mills Chairmanship.

In more recent times I became a National Observer and then Local Observer Assessor and had previously done a stint on the committee. I've been around to see many Chairmen come and go all doing an admirable job in the hot seat and I reckon our present incumbent Chairlady/Chairperson, Linda Davies, may well be the longest serving one and deserves acknowledgement for her leadership and always selflessly handing out the accolades to others.

An interesting and perversely amusing episode occurred when Lester Parsons was conducting a Senior Observer retest with Linda D and myself. I had an awkward moment with a vehicle I'd picked up only the afternoon before and it was low on fuel or the newness seemed to affect the fuel injection and felt like it was going to cut-out...think FLOWER cockpit drill – FUEL for the journey? Then (someone) hadn't ensured *all doors secure*. Dear Lester, generous to a fault. As a Group member and Observer I have had the privilege of doing some memorable trips and activities. A summer Saturday shift with Kent Traffic Police, mostly spent on blues-and-twos at motorway speeds up to 153mph.....and they back off to around 100-110 if there's much else about! We had to interrupt a tea break, well needs must, at Clacketts Lane services because we had to deal with a serious incident near the Darenth Interchange. That day alone has enough material to write a complete article.... perhaps I did come to think of it.

An incisive visit to the Highways Agency, as was (are they National Highways or Highways England now? Answers please from Andy Houghton) at the Godstone control centre off the M25 and another to the Dartford Crossing Control Centre the week the QEII bridge was opened are two that stand out. It was a wild night and you may recall there was widespread criticism that not more money was spent to include wind breaks in the event of high winds. Whilst in the control room our host was fielding phone calls (put on speaker for our benefit) from notable Sunday newspapers trying to write tomorrow's banner headline along the lines of '*we suppose with the excessively high winds you'll need to close this brand new £10 million bridge and all because we didn't include protection....*' The bridge remained open with buffer lanes but the media missed a great headline as the crew changing over to the next shift hadn't completed their training for gantry sign operation and didn't know how to switch them off!!! So, they remained on longer than necessary. HaHa!

It's been a valuable, memorable and enjoyable part of my life and I shall remain in contact and continue to enjoy the social group activity and may even drop in on a Sunday morning to say hello. Cheers, - retiring National Observer - **David Ibbott**

'Dibbott' - thanks for all your years of service and all the fun & laughter - don't be a stranger!!

Let me get it out there front and centre that I replaced my car at the end of 2022 and no I did not go for an Electric Vehicle (EV). Not that I did not want to, it was just not right for me at the moment. I do like to compare facts and figures, gather information for various cars, do a sound comparison to get down to a shortlist, test drive and job done. For EVs it does seem to be much more difficult to get robust comparable data with many websites frankly printing so much tosh it is difficult to work out fact from fiction.

Lies, damn lies and EV statistics.

Before changing cars, it was interesting to get the views of my EV driving friends and family. One is a diehard EV'er, is absolutely delighted and would never change back. I have another friend that loves their EV but hates taking it on long journeys as the charging is and I quote him "a complete nightmare" (in fact he now takes his wife's petrol SUV on long journeys) and a third friend who wishes with a passion he had never bought an EV as being a high mileage driver it is just so impractical compared to his old non EV car (and don't even get him started on winter driving). And much like Marmite (other yeast spreads are available), EVs seem to be a love it or loath it sort of thing very much dependent on how well they fit with your driving needs.

One interesting story I read in a magazine recently was of a motorist who had a BMW Xi which in general he loved, albeit readily admitting his 23 solar roof panels were helping support that decision. Despite his love he reported two major areas where there is huge discrepancy between EV vision and EV reality:

- Despite the official range on his car being 262 miles he found he was getting closer to 200 miles and over the really harsh winter months closer to 150 miles.
- Never in a million years will you get even remotely close to the claimed output from a charging station or the car's maximum charging capacity. Despite his car being rated 150kW/h the most he ever achieved was 70 kW/h at a 350kW/h charger and most of the time it is around 40kW/h.

Now those are massive differences.

We of course know petrol/diesel MPG is also a mythical creature which is produced in a "laboratory environment" but nevertheless you can at least usually get close to it (although as an advanced motorist I have been almost spot on published MPG figures in both of my last two cars). If you bought a car that purported to do 40 MPG but you actually got closer to 20 or 25 MPG you would rightly be a bit cheated off.

However, the same is in general not such an issue for many EV drivers particularly where they are mainly doing local journeys and charging their cars at home overnight in which case neither range nor charging are of much concern.

So, are the cars getting better and better?

Absolutely. I take my hat off to the car manufacturing industry who appear to be doing a great job in responding to the 2030 petrol and diesel new car ban in the UK (EV day). With 7 years to go, choice is increasing, range seems to be getting better all the time and prices are slowly but surely looking a little bit better, albeit the cost of an EV still remains far too high for the vast majority of motorists.

I suspect in the medium term, EVs are going to be another rich/poor divide with the well-off EV drivers "looking down their green noses" at the less well off in society who are stuck in cars pumping out CO² and NO but to be frank, when faced with the choice of Eat vs Heat, couldn't give two hoots about their green motoring credentials.

Is the government doing their bit?

Excuse the slight pause in my typing as I wipe tears of laughter from my eyes. I think it would be fair to say (without any political bias) that for the government it is all about policy and feeble on detail (or to quote a very apt expression I loved from my time working in Scotland they are "all fur coat and nae knickers").

Example: after setting a target of 300,000 public charging points installed by 2030, by the end of 2022 there were only 37,000 chargers, that being after 8,700 were installed in 2022. On that trajectory unless somebody seriously pulls their finger out, they are going to be closer to 100,000 by the start of 2030 than 300,000.

To get to 300,000 chargers needs 37,500 installs p.a. not 8,700 as per 2022. If they substantially miss the target that makes for some bad looking statistics:

- At the end of 2022 there were c715k EVs with 37,000 public chargers – 1 per 19 cars
- If we hit the predicted 8m EVs by 2030 and there are only 100,000 chargers - 1 per 80 cars

If we hear numerous complaints now about poor public charging infrastructure, when we effectively have what amounts to a glut of chargers, when that ratio possibly quadruples that is not going to be a fun place to be.

So who are buying EVs at the moment and why is that important?

I suspect EV buyers are vastly skewed towards better off individuals. As of July 2022, the average cost of a brand new EV was c£48k. Compare that to non EV vehicles where the average cost were SUV £38k, MPV £28k, saloon £37k and estate £31k. Even sprinkling those averages with a healthy degree of scepticism, EVs remain substantially more expensive than their petrol/diesel counterparts.

It can't therefore be a wild leap of faith to assume that most current EV drivers are not hard up for a few quid to be able to afford the higher initial purchase and on that basis I suspect a large proportion of them live in a house with a garage, off road parking or access to some form of charging at home. This would explain why range is much less of an issue now as most current EV drivers have much lower need to use the public charging network.

This currently creates an artificial position where the current EV driver (lower mileage and easily able to charge their car at home) in no way representative of what the future EV driver might look like when those living in flats, tower blocks or terraced houses come to switch to an EV and public charging becomes hugely important.

So what real charging issues have we not seen much of yet?

Fast forward a few years and let's look at the EV journey for a few different motorists.

Mr Brown lives in Clarendon Place in Dover, a street with 200 terraced homes. He often works late getting home about 18:30. At that time he normally struggles to find a parking place close to his home, let alone a space with a charging point. So where does Mr Brown plug in his EV (noting there are c7m terraced houses in the UK)?

Nurse Scarlet leaves William Harvey Hospital in Ashford after her 12 hour night shift in A&E and returns to her 10th floor flat in Arlington House, Margate. Arriving home at 06:30 where does she charge her car before she slides into bed for a well-earned rest (noting there are 3.2m leasehold flats in the UK).

Mr Blue lives in deepest darkest Kent (probably just down the road from me) and after a business trip in Brighton he gets back home quite late. After popping his car on charge and going off to bed, his area suffers a local power outage. He gets up to darkness in the morning and whilst he can make a cup of tea using a saucepan on his gas hob it then dawns on him that his car has not been charging overnight.

Mr McGreen is a hardy sort having lived in rural Scotland all his life; he laughs in the face of Storm Otto. Well, that is until he and 2,000 other local residents realise, they are going to be without power for the next week!

These are the drivers where the EV dream is likely to be a little challenging.

And what will the etiquette be for charging when you go and visit someone?

Currently if you drive to visit a friend, when you get there, you don't ask to syphon off a couple of gallons of fuel from their car to make the journey back. So, what happens when you visit in your EV?

Mr Blue leaves his home in Gravesend, and in his Mini One just about makes the 91 mile, 2 hour journey to see his friend in the rural village of Aldreth just north of Cambridge, albeit at that stage he is seriously in need of a charge. Will it become normal etiquette that Mr Blue rolls out a heavy duty 13A extension lead from his boot to pop it through his friend's kitchen window to charge up his car overnight (just don't go visit nurse Scarlet, Mr Blue!)? Are we really going to be expecting to charge up our cars for free when we go visit someone?

So what might we expect as we approach and pass EV day?

In 2028 and 2029 it feels more likely than not that there will be a peak in the purchase of new petrol and diesel cars in the run up to EV day as many buyers will want to get a nice new vehicle so that they can put off switching to an EV for another 3 or 4 years, or until the government realises it has made a complete dog's breakfast off it and potentially "softens" EV day.

Interestingly, with 7 years still to go the AA has already come out recently warning “more people will hang on to older combustion engine cars long past 2030”. This is likely to see the second hand car market for non EV cars overheat similar to the chip crisis of 2022 as post 2030, with an ever reducing pool of non EV cars, prices will inevitably rise – once again hitting the poorest the hardest.

I wonder if households that currently have 2 or more cars, will position themselves that when they do switch to EVs, they retain one non EV car in the family.

EV momentum is clearly on the rise although I do worry that the current type of current EV driver is masking a number of big challenges that will only really surfaces as EVs roll out to a wider cohort of drivers who are not so easily placed to charge up at home every night. **Daren Bubb**

A gift offering Skills for Life

John Bowman

Almost without exception, people who own and run a car think that they are a ‘good driver’. And then we get out there on the road and notice all the ‘bad drivers’ around.

Let’s go back to the ‘start’ of our driving lifetime. Many think this is when they took their driving test. But their driving education started long before as they were transported around by parents and grandparents who ‘must be doing it right’

Anyone who learns to drive today must study for a theory test combined with ‘hazard perception’ tests. (And two wheelers must do some basic motorcycle control tests too). And after some practical training they take their driving test, which if passed successfully, grants a full driving licence to drive any vehicle, in any conditions, anywhere in the country. There is a law that if the new driver accumulates too many points on their licence in the first two years that they must go back to repeat all the tests with a provisional licence.

Since 1956 there has been an organisation that offers the opportunity for all drivers to improve their driving to an ‘Advanced’ standard. Nowadays it is known as IAM RoadSmart. They offer driver training and assessments throughout the country based around IPSGA – the System of Car Control.

IAM RoadSmart operates mainly through local charity groups of volunteers, all of whom have taken their own advanced test as well as additional training and a qualification as an ‘Observer’ to deliver that training to others. Observers may also carry out basic driving assessments for members of the public. Drivers may enrol in an ‘Advanced Driver’ course to go on to take the advanced test. There are also ‘Advanced Rider’ courses run through similar local motorcycle groups. And there is a no-test ‘Young Driver Assessment’ available too.

In 2022 the IAM RoadSmart test may be ‘passed’ or the candidate may achieve a higher standard named ‘F1rst’. Having passed the test, one becomes a member of IAM RoadSmart. There is then an option to go on to train for and acquire a ‘Masters’ standard and this may also be simply ‘passed’ or achieved with ‘Distinction’. The latter is the highest level of driving that is available to the civilian population.

Anyway, wherever you are in your driving lifetime there is something for you. The local group is Kent Group Advanced Motorists (KGAM) formed in 1978. They run courses at two Kent venues on Sunday mornings: the western one is at Grove Green the north east of Maidstone, the other is near Canterbury. For those who have other commitments on Sunday mornings there is an alternative course offering too. If you want to know more about KGAM, they have a website (www.kentiam.org.uk) where the contact is Terry Nunn email: associates@kentiam.org.uk .

So, whether you are new to driving, or teaching future drivers as ‘the taxi service of . . .’ or just want your driving standard to be assessed / improved there is an opportunity for you. And if you know someone who you think might benefit for improving their driving then why not buy them a ‘train and test’ package for Christmas or a Birthday?

Kent Group of Advanced Motorists

(Registered Charity No. 1051416)

Notice of our 45th Annual General Meeting

**which will be held at the Grove Green Community Centre
Penhurst Close Maidstone ME14 5BT**

on Tuesday 16th of May 2023 at 8.00pm



Agenda



- 1 Welcome to Guests and apologies for absence**
- 2 Minutes of Previous AGM**
- 3 Chairman's Report**
- 4 Treasurer's Report**
- 5 Elections -**
 - Chairman**
 - Vice-Chairman**
 - Secretary**
 - Treasurer**
 - Committee**
- 6 Presentations**
- 7 A O B**
- 8 Refreshments**
- 9 Guest Speaker - Mr Daren Bubb**



Kent Group of Advanced Motorists (KGAM)
Charity No: 1051416 Form of Proxy

I (name)

of (address)

.....

.....

hereby appoint (name of appointee)

to vote for me and on my behalf at the
Annual General Meeting of the
Kent Group of Advanced Motorists
to be held on the **16th May 2023**
8pm at The Grove Green Community Centre
and at every adjournment thereof

This form of proxy to be used in respect of
all resolutions put to the meeting

As witness my hand this day of 2023

Signature

KGAM Membership Number

This is the only form which will be accepted and must be returned to
The Group Secretary

Kent Group of Advanced Motorists - Nomination Form

45TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 16TH MAY 2023

(Registered Charity No. 1051416)

Name

Kent Group
Membership no.

Signature

CHAIRMAN

Nominee			
Proposer			
Seconder			

VICE CHAIRMAN

Nominee			
Proposer			
Seconder			

SECRETARY

Nominee			
Proposer			
Seconder			

TREASURER

Nominee			
Proposer			
Seconder			

COMMITTEE MEMBER

Nominee			
Proposer			
Seconder			

Members disqualified by law from acting as a Charity Trustee are not eligible to serve
on the Group Committee (Rule 3.3).

This is the only form which will be accepted and must be returned by post before 8pm on the 8th May 2023
to the Group Secretary

We've all seen the tv programmes of out-takes, bloopers – call them what you will. These show that even professional actors and broadcasters can have a bad moment, which are forever captured on film. Unless it's a live broadcast they have the advantage of another take or more until the Director is satisfied.

Such incidents also occur in the theatre be it professional or amateur. Elaine Paige on Sundays has a regular spot for onstage mishaps, whether they are professional or amateur. Of course, they do give amusement but if you are involved it may not be funny at the time, and with an audience sitting out there makes the situation worse. Re-telling it later can be turned into an amusing anecdote for an after-dinner story. Rehearsals are not only to get the words and moves right, but also hopefully identify where things could go wrong and provide the opportunity to put it right. As rehearsal progress the stage crew and technicians are brought in as they too need to know their cues. Arising from this is that well known phrase "It'll be alright on the night". Invariably it usually is.

The Mischief Theatre Company admirably sum it all up in their hilarious "Goes Wrong" plays. Those of us who have been involved with theatre will really appreciate how true it could all be. Having been involved with theatre from a very young age I have been involved in some mishaps.

As one of two male leads we had a duologue that went on for several pages of the script. In one performance we somehow managed to jump five pages. I could see the prompter quickly turning over pages to find where we now were. About three pages later we picked up from the cue that had been missed, did the missing five pages plus re-doing the three we had already done – more frantic page turning by the prompter! I was told the audience didn't notice anything was amiss.

As Assistant Stage Manager in a Victorian period drama we had a very quick scene change to do. With two stage hands we waited off-set by a door into the set. When the curtains closed and the actors came off-set we were to go onstage to quickly do the change. Sometimes we had to hurry the actors to get off so we could do the change.

The end of the scene came, the audience applauded but the actors didn't come off. Why? We didn't know because we can't see onto the set. I thought they were just taking their time, so I opened the door to find that the curtain on my side had not closed (it had come off its runner). So, there was I with two stage hands behind me in full view of the audience. Thankfully, the Lecky quickly realised what had gone wrong, went to blackout and brought up the houselights. The interval took rather longer than planned while the curtain was replaced.

Progressing to Stage Manager our director while on a continental holiday had visited a theatre. There he had found what he called "continental thumps" three loud thudding sounds at the beginning of each act to draw the audience's attention that the play was now beginning. On dress rehearsal he said he wanted me to do these. After explaining what they were with nothing available with which to do them I stamped heavily onto the floor of my perch which was hollow underneath so the sound reverberated. It startled the cast who had not been made aware of it, but we persevered through the run. Later the Front of House Manager told me the audience couldn't hear them. Nobody else had heard about "continental thumps" and I have never heard of them since.

I'd always wanted to have a go at being a Narrator or Voice Over artiste. I got involved with a film group in Gravesend who had been commissioned by Gravesham Council to film the opening of the St George's Centre by Princess Michael of Kent.

The council had provided some areas and platform on which to place their film and sound equipment. As was often the case with them they arrived late to find their spaces taken over by the spectators. They managed to film the event but couldn't get the sound. When we met to do the narration they explained this to me and said that as they hadn't got the sound they wanted me to say the Princess's speech which they would lip synch with the film. I flatly refused to do so as my voice was nothing like that of the Princess!

There are others but a non-mishap I fondly remember is “The Long and the Short and the Tall.” It takes place in a bamboo hut in the Malayan Jungle during the Japanese invasion. I was in the cast so we could only hear this offstage while waiting to make our entry. To set the scene the curtains opened on a darkened set with a spotlight on a radio on which is heard a BBC news broadcast about the invasion. The spot is faded out, the radio removed, and the stage lights slowly brought up with jungle sounds. Every night the audience applauded and that was before we even made our dramatic entrance by kicking the door in!

Long live, live theatre.

Terry Nunn

All Things Electric - an update

John Bowman

I thought that now was a good time to provide some feedback and follow-up to my articles in previous magazines about EVs, solar panels, home batteries, SMART meters and low cost tariffs.

I write as the National Grid is implementing its ‘Demand Flexibility Scheme’ (DFS) this evening whereby about a million households will be paid to cut back their electricity use in a particular peak period. For consumers with Octopus Energy this is part of the ‘Saving Sessions’. Other energy providers are available! Basically, it helps the grid to not have to run coal fired power stations if we can (say) cook dinner a little earlier or later than the peak.

So let’s start with electric vehicles (EVs). Since my article about my own EV purchased in March 2021, I see many EVs on the road with their green number plates. Even the milk flatbed truck (not a slow milk float) which delivers to my neighbour early morning is all electric.

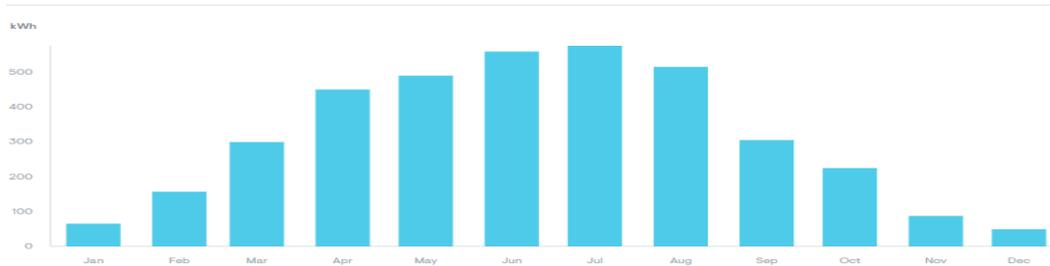
EVs are quiet, smooth, accelerate briskly and if charged at home, especially on low-rate overnight tariff using a SMART meter are very cheap to run. Combine this with the massive reduction in complexity compared to the parts that make up an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle with lots of moving parts, lots of heat, oil changes, etc., etc., EVs are much more reliable which reflects in lower servicing costs. EVs are currently zero rated for vehicle excise duty (VED) – commonly called road tax. While EVs may be more expensive to buy, especially new, the total cost of ownership over a few years easily leaves the owner ‘in profit’. That’s why many of the van-based delivery services are starting to invest in EVs. The fleet manager can see the financial sense! For those who chose to purchase cars second hand, there are many EVs out there. There are garages that specialise in EV servicing who can provide guidance. HEVRA is the Hybrid and Electric Vehicle Repair Alliance. Second hand Nissan Leaf, BMW i3, Renault Zoe and Kia Soul are just a few EVs that were launched in the UK in 2013/2014. And as you come forward to 2017 onwards you can add many more such as Hyundai Ioniq, Kia e-Niro, Hyundai Kona. And of course, there were Teslas throughout.

One question that many ask when talking about EVs is “what is the range?” This is the wrong question. Only a fraction of the UK driver population can drive from London to Edinburgh without stopping for food, the loo, etc. While you ‘graze’ your EV can be grazing (recharging) too. You don’t have to be with it to ‘refuel’. And just as one would not typically spend ages getting the last eggcup full of fuel into an ICE car and run it until it is ‘drinking’ the dirt in the bottom of the fuel tank, EVs will typically be run between 15% and 80% battery charge. Very low charge is not good for the battery. And charging slows as the battery gets to full, also to protect the battery. That’s why EV batteries last the life of the car (and then go on to second life usage) compared to your mobile phone battery which is constantly run from flat to 100% and is in need of replacement in a few short years.

The question to ask about any car is what is the economy. For an ICE car you ask about the fuel consumption (mpg). For EVs be asking for miles per kilowatt hour (m/kWh) of over four and check that for urban, motorway and summer / winter: all such data can be found on the EV database online. Tesla have driven the EV market with superb battery technology and software: as a car maker they still have a lot to learn. The South Korean car makers Hyundai / Kia (they are one company behind the scenes) are renowned for being able to deliver good quality EVs that are economical. Within Europe VW and Stellantis are two groups of companies that offer numerous EVs (often identical technology) under their multiple brand badges. The MG brand is another to look at. There are many more upmarket brands offering EVs too, often with large SUV bodies and

high price tags to match that will be a future 'shock' for the later second hand owners when they look at the high electricity costs to run them!

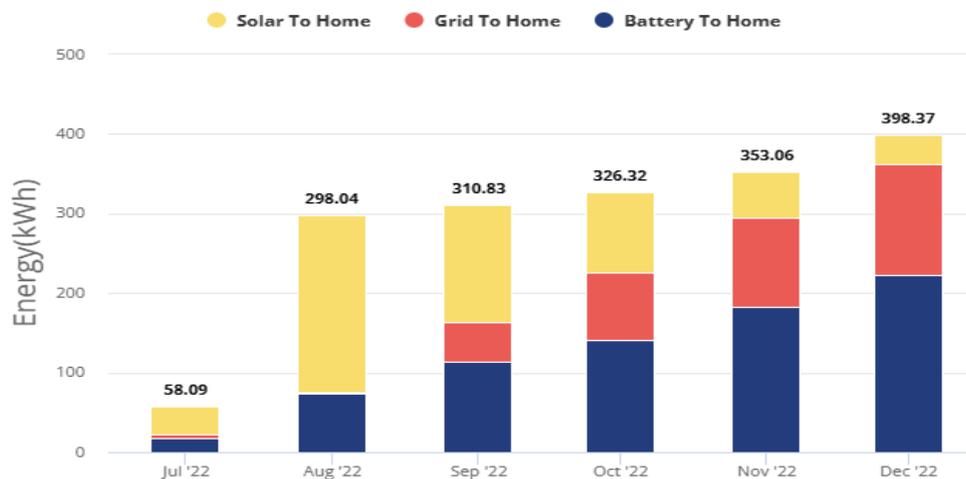
Moving on to solar panels, my array had its first birthday a week ago. In that year it had generated about 3.8 MWh of electricity. (The forecast prediction was just over 3 MWh based on an industry standard calculator). It was sunny in the summer!



In the first six months what I learned was that I could indeed reduce my gas consumption (my primary reason for getting solar) by running electric heaters in the milder shoulder seasons removing or reducing the use of the gas central heating. All my water is electrically heated rather than using the gas boiler. With the increase in gas prices that reduced gas consumption has still left me with a higher gas bill – but far less that it would have been otherwise.

From about April through to September all my home car driving was powered from solar, only requiring use of the public charging network on long trips such as to Cornwall in June. At my destination farm B&B I arranged to trickle charge overnight and paid the owner for the electricity at their standard unit rate: if you have an EV always look for 'destination charging' options. In peak early summer, I was often exporting solar to the grid as I couldn't use it all on site.

Since mid-July, when my home battery arrived, electricity grid use reduced further as I could use the battery, charged by solar during the day, to run the home overnight. The thing that I would recommend to any of you considering wanting to invest in your home is go for a home battery with low-rate overnight tariff BEFORE solar.



The battery installation, whether in the home or an outbuilding such as a dry, solidly built garage, is straightforward and doesn't need the cost of scaffolding to access the roof as is required for solar. In the dull days of winter from late October through to late February the home battery (and my car) would require some overnight charging on low-rate tariff as there wasn't enough solar generation. In the worse period in dull December the solar generation was almost nil but I could still pay less for electricity running my home and car using my 'Octopus Go' tariff from 00:30 to 04:30.

Having a full years of data on the solar and six months on home battery I am now looking to invest in a few more solar panels fitted under permitted development rights and orientated to best boost my mid-winter mid-day solar generation. I don't expect to see them before next winter as all the companies who offer renewables are very busy. Anyone thinking about a new job / training ought to be thinking about this industry.

**Kent Group of Advanced Motorists
Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023**

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

	12 months to 31 March 2023	12 months to 31 March 2022
	£	£
Receipts		
Subscriptions - Full	1,690	1,803
Subscriptions - Associates	1,860	1,395
	<u>3,550</u>	<u>3,198</u>
Gift Aid	223	226
Bank interest	419	230
Other income	374	67
Total receipts	<u>4,566</u>	<u>3,721</u>
Payments		
Hall hire	1,692	471
Magazine	490	550
Postage	376	548
Stationery and printing	49	106
IT costs	66	14
Equipment repairs	0	25
Insurance	177	308
Training/training books	1,361	899
Travel	276	227
Refreshments	148	256
Events and publicity	1,898	662
Other expenses	223	168
Sub-total	<u>6,756</u>	<u>4,234</u>
Asset purchases during the year		
Projector	0	549
Sub-total	<u>0</u>	<u>549</u>
Total payments	<u>6,756</u>	<u>4,783</u>
Net payments for the year	(2,190)	(1,062)
Cash funds last year end	23,671	24,733
Cash funds this year end	<u>21,481</u>	<u>23,671</u>

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES		
	As at	As at
	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
Cash funds	£	£
Deposit account	20,854	23,185
Bank current account	557	416
Cash floats	70	70
Total cash funds	21,481	23,671
Assets retained for the charity's own use	Original	31 March 2023
	Cost	Current value
Details	£	£
Projector for The Barn	312	0
Cabinet for The Barn	151	0
Laptop for The Barn	384	0
Laptop for Grove Green	434	32
Cupboard for The Barn	171	17
Laptop for The Barn	369	131
DVD player and cables	80	40
Projector for Grove Green	549	467
	2,450	687

Treasurers' Report to Members

We have now prepared our accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 which I duly provide above for your consideration (adopted at March 23 committee). As in previous years, I will provide a short commentary supporting these figures for those of you unable to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM). However, let me see if I can tempt you to come along. After our normally short AGM business, yours truly will be acting as guest speaker for the night with a presentation on “**the loves and lusts of a group treasurer**” – consider yourself duly invited on the 16th May at Grove Green.

Although it may seem like a standing comment it is important that I once again take time to thank Neil Oliver for his diligent review of our accounts. It remains a key check for us all to have another set of professional and qualified financial eyes look over and review our results.

2022/23 represented the first full year free of covid restrictions since the pandemic began. What this has meant from a financial perspective, as you will see in our results, is we incurred a higher-than-normal level of outgoings as we “stock ourselves back up” for business as usual. In doing so, we recorded an excess of payments over income of £2,190 (21/22: £1,062).

Considering **receipts** first, in my 2021/22 report last year, I noted that the economic crisis was going to make it increasingly difficult to attract new Associates for the next couple of years. Despite the great work of our outside events team in extracting £175 from would be Associates, when people are faced with ever increasing household bills, the advanced course drops down/off the to do list even if it remains great value for money. Despite that challenging backdrop, our receipts increased by £845 on last year mainly due to extra Associate income and higher interest rates.

Turning to **payments**, the group's cheque book has had a good workout to ensure we can continue to offer the best level of service. Although the analysis of payments above is relatively self-explanatory, I wanted to draw out a few one-off payments during the year:

- Back log hall hire at the Barn £180.
- 3 year first aid refresher training at Grove Green £396
- New observer training weekends and copies of new highway codes £495.
- Platinum Jubilee celebration £393.

Although this year we spent more than we received, this was directly linked to getting ourselves ramped back up against the challenge of getting Associates through the front door. This has directly driven our outgoings where we paid out £2,190 more than we received.

The short-term financial conundrum we face is that for our hall-based courses at Grove Green and Kingston the cost to run each course is broadly the same whether we have 20 Associates or 5 Associates in the hall. Run a course with 20 people and we generate a surplus, run with only 5 and we operate at a loss. Facing reality, I suspect courses with less than 10 people are likely to be the norm for a few years. Although this means we are likely to have a few years where outgoings exceed income, because we ended the year with £21.5k in the bank this will allow us to continue to offer our very successful training programme, which is of course one of our core charitable aims.

Notwithstanding the level of our reserves, at our March 2023 committee meeting we considered a projection of outgoings for 23/24 and agreed we revisit this at a future meeting to enable us to proactively plan our outgoings for 23/24 to make sure we continue to spend our money wisely.

That's me done, so until I hopefully see you at the AGM drive safe (but make good progress).

Daren Bubb FCA – Treasurer

Group Social Evenings

8pm at Grove Green Maidstone

May 16th	AGM	45th Anniversary Celebrations with Buffet refreshments and Cake. Speaker Daren Bubb .The Loves and Lusts of an IAM treasurer
June 20th	Mel Rees	My Family and Other Setbacks
July 18th	Lester Parsons	IAM Examiner
Aug 15th	Sue Shaw	Tanzania revealed Highlights of the National Parks
Sept 19th	John Bowman & Nick Skew	Everything Electric
Oct 17th	Roger Phillips	Life in Oregon
Nov 21st	Lester Parsons	IAM Examiner
Dec19th	Quiz Night	Fun evening with Christmas fayre and Ploughman's Supper

Hot off the press date for your diaries! - **on Feb 20th 2024** we will welcome Richard Griffin LVO Richard served in the Metropolitan Police from 1970 to 2013 when he retired at the rank of Superintendent. From 1983 to 1986 he was the Personal Protection Officer to The Prince Edward, from 1986 to 1999 he was PPO to The Duke of Edinburgh and then from 1999 to 2013 he was PPO to Her Majesty the Queen, a position known as The Queens Police Officer. Her Majesty the Queen invested him with the honour of LVO, Lieutenant of the Royal Victorian Order, on his retirement. Sounds like an excellent evening not to be missed - please make a note now

I just reversed into a Bugatti but I left him a note on my bank statement so he knows not to bother calling me

Getting the most from your EV

Range remains a key consideration when buying an electric car. Although all new electric cars have an official range in miles that is quoted by the manufacturer that represents the figure that, with careful driving, you should expect to achieve. However, there are a number of factors that can eat away at those quoted miles

Factors that affect electric car range

How close you get to those figures comes down to the following factors:

Temperature – Cold weather can slash electric range by around **40 percent**. Tests in the USA also found high temperatures can have a negative impact on EV range.

Speed – The faster you drive, the more energy you will consume.

Load – If you drive with three passengers and their luggage, the electric motor will have to work harder, reducing the car's range.

In-car technology – Switching on the air conditioning, charging your smartphone and enjoying a heated seat will eat into the range. Use the creature comforts and tech in moderation.

Terrain – If you live in mostly flat Norfolk or Lincolnshire, you stand more chance of achieving the quoted range than a driver in Devon or the North Yorkshire Moors. Hills are the enemy of electric range.

Driving style – Testing those 0-62mph times in your EV might be exciting, but the car's range will suffer. Slow and steady wins this particular race.

How to maximise electric range

Taking the above into account will help you get closer to the quoted range, but there are other things you can do to maximise mileage:

- **Slow down** – Driving at a steady 40-50mph will ensure you get further on a single charge (albeit that does somewhat hamper the principles of making good progress!).
- **Go easy on the options and accessories** – But not to the detriment of comfort and safety - clearly driving in the rain without wipers isn't advisable.
- **Regen when possible** – Harvesting energy via your car's regenerative braking should become part of your everyday driving routine.
- **Tyre pressures** – Make sure your tyres are inflated to the correct pressures.
- **Avoid big alloy wheels** – The larger the alloys, the less efficient you are. Think about that when you're specifying your new electric car.
- **Choose an eco route** – Some sat-navs feature a 'green route' option. This should be your choice if you hope to get more from the battery.

Great as that is, that does somewhat go against the big selling points that EVs go like a scalded cat (no animals were harmed in the writing of this article) and are packed to the roof.

Change your car horn sound to gunshots - people move over much faster!

Help needed please!

Our outside events team who are out and about in all weathers are at the following events this year

20th May - The Classic Car Show at Deal;

24th June - The Classic Car Show at Canterbury;

23rd July - The Cats Protection League at Bredhurst and also on the

23rd July - The Cars on the Green at Bearsted.

We hope to cover both events on the 23 July so your help would be appreciated.

If you can assist, please contact Phil & Alan on outside-events@kentiam.org.uk Thank you.

Visit to the Air Ambulance Base at Redhill

Following on from our January Social Evening, when a representative from the Air Ambulance came to give us a talk, we were kindly invited 'back to their house' for a visit. It was a great experience as we were shown all around their offices, rapid response cars and the latest 'mock up' of where the patient is carried in the aircraft. Now that the Helicopters are much larger there is sufficient room for the crew to work all round the casualty! What wonderful work they do so if you want to help their worthwhile cause by fundraising, volunteering, donating or taking part in their lottery please go to www.aakss.org.uk

Never get into a lane-merging game of chicken with a person who has a black sack for a car door window